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Joint Meeting of the RID Committee of Experts and the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
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Item 6 of the provisional agenda
Reports of informal working groups

Informal working group on multimodal database on events involving transport of dangerous goods (Valenciennes, 10-11 October 2013)

Transmitted by the Government of France[1, 2]

Introduction

1. An informal working group session was held in Valenciennes at the premises of the European Railways Agency (ERA) from 10-11 October 2013

2. Representatives of Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the European Union, ERA, OTIF, UNECE, CEFIC, AEGPL participated.

3. The Group was chaired by Claude Pfauvadel (France), chairman of the Joint Meeting.

Background

1. The Joint Meeting at its March 2013 session (see ECE/TRANS/WP.15/AC.1/130, paras 67-70) noted with interest that, following discussions at the previous session

[1] In accordance with the programme of work of the Inland Transport Committee for 2012–2016 (ECE/TRANS/224, para. 94, ECE/TRANS/2012/12, programme activity 02.7 (A1c)).

[2] Circulated by the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) under the symbol OTIF/RID/RC/2014/37.

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(ECE/TRANS/WP.15/AC.1/128, paras. 64 and 65), the secretariat and the Government of France had cooperated to develop a database project based on the model used in France, which could be used by all relevant authorities to provide the secretariat with information required under 1.8.5 of RID/ADR/ADN.

2. It was also mentioned that an informal working group would meet in autumn 2013 to discuss the procedures for transmitting data, the contents of the database and the challenge of ensuring that the criteria and data were harmonized and consistent with those of other databases such as the (ERA) database, as well as the possible revision of 1.8.5.

3. This report does not reflect all the detailed discussions during the meeting but summarizes the main points raised for improving the database software and the model of report itself as defined by the regulations that should be taken in account for further work

Day 1 (10 October 2013)

4. A Dangerous Goods Events Database had been provided by UNECE in April 2013 to countries participating in the pilot project (Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland...). Several countries had already inserted the data into the UNECE database. Several comments, discussions and proposals were raised from the first use of the database.

5. The UNECE database software provided to participating countries is technically operational. Several comments raised by participants were related to the user interface, the understanding of certain data labels, and the proposals. The main points discussed were as follows:

(a) Request for enhancement of the layout and the user interface: the data inputs of "company name", "email" could be exceeding the length of the corresponding input boxes;

(b) Request for addition of more fields (topography, weather, consequences) sections. That need partly reflects the limitation of the required information in the current 1.8.5.4 RID/ADR model of report;

(c) To clarify some data labels, like "date", "time" (when the accident occurred or the first call received by authorities), "city", "location" (additional information), "contact code" (national registration number of the company);

(d) The display of the list of events in reverse chronological order, according to the date of the occurrence. The last one should be at the top of the list;

(e) Distinction must be made between dangerous goods fire and external fire. The notion of "fire" appears, in both places: "description of occurrence" tab (fire check-box to be ticked if applicable) and "dangerous goods involved" tab (through the "failure type" drop down list). So, the user could take into account an "external fire" by selecting the "fire" check-box. The "dangerous goods fire" also requires the appropriate choice (fire) in the failure type drop down list;

(f) The notion of "loss" of the product appears in 3 different places. So, in order to share a common understanding, the proposal was:

(i) Description of occurrence: the "loss" check box have to be ticked if a loss of goods was reported, regardless of the quantity of loss (*the loss SOLELY caused by rescue operations, if known, should not be taken into account*);

(ii) Dangerous goods involved: the type of failure of means of containment (dropdown list) should be set "loss" according to the quantity of loss specified

beside. When that quantity is unknown, the type of failure has also to be set "loss", if any;

(iii) Consequences of occurrence: loss of product set to "Yes" when the quantity of loss meets the 1.8.5 criteria (related to the transport category);

(g) Certain participants asked how long the insertion of an event in the UNECE database would take. When users get used to it, the task could be done within 5 minutes. But, the main question at stake was whether they had got all the information needed about the accident. Practically, the task could be divided in 2 or 3 steps depending on how they manage their work and the time needed for obtaining the additional information (from police, rescue team, 1.8.5 report);

(h) Request to enable attachment of useful documents (report, images, ..) related to the accident into the database;

(i) Request to enable printing of a report of accident according to the format of the model of report in 1.8.5.4;.

(j) Several requests concerned the addition of more and structured details to the "topography", "transport infrastructure", "description" and "cause" of the accident. These changes could affect the current data present in the 1.8.5.4 RID/ADR form and will be discussed at the Joint Meeting session. About this topic, the Chairman pointed out the benefit for future queries of the database if the detailed description list could be ranked according what the facts took place, in time.

6. In addition some comments were made concerning improvements that would lead to modification of the RID/ADR text itself.

7. New entries could be added under existing fields to avoid as much as possible the use of text boxes which can be problematic for translation purposes. Most of the comments which were made in text boxes were needed because the codified description was not sufficiently detailed.

8. Proposals to change some of the fields or to add new fields were made. In some cases, this would also require the modification of the Model for report on occurrences in 1.8.5.4 and should be discussed first by the Joint Meeting.

9. The description of the location of the occurrence could be standardized by using the road/railway identification and the km point. The use of global positioning system was not retained as the GPS position is not always available on site. It could be added as an optional field.

10. The description of the causes is considered insufficient for risk assessment purposes. It was suggested that the causes could be categorized to better describe the event. Either a chronological ranking or a default tree organization of the events could be used.

11. The possibility of inserting optional fields was discussed. It would be technically feasible and could give more flexibility in the database without deviating from the frame of 1.8.5. These optional fields should be determined with the view of the expected use of the data.

12. The user should have the possibility to include hyperlinks or links to pictures or images in the description of the event.

13. General comments were also made:

- The representatives of the industry supported the project;

- To avoid duplication of work, an analysis of the contents of other existing databases (e.g. in the area of road safety, transport of dangerous goods by other modes)

could be done to determine which data can be extracted from these databases and how the compatibility can be improved. It could be useful to have a single reference number for each occurrence which could be recognised in all linked databases;

- The issue of data protection may not be relevant during the testing phase (pilot project) but should be considered before the database is made accessible on line.

Presentation of an accident database used in Spain:

14. The representative of Spain presented the database used in Spain (Catalonia and Basque country are not included) since 2011 for the report of occurrences and the outputs of this database (statistics and graphics). These figures are available to public in Spain.

15. All the events that occurred are inputs in the database (whose that match the 1.8.5 criteria and also the others).

Day 2 (11 October 2013)

16. A presentation of the database E-Rail was made by ERA.

17. Different comments and proposals were made and discussed. In conclusion, the informal working group considered that it would be very useful to make a link between the two databases (UNECE database and E-Rail). That experience could be extended, in the future, to comparable databases for the other modes.

18. ERA was invited to present such a proposal at the Joint Meeting in March.

ERA Presentation: Occurrence reporting relying on accident fault trees

19. Previously, this presentation was planned on the agenda of the workshop on risk evaluation and assessment (9 October).

20. The presentation is published on the ERA website.

21. The working group recognised that it would be favourable to harmonised structures of databases.

Conclusions

22. The Chairman summarized the discussions and stressed that the data collection may be done step by step: each national authority had to remind the undertakings involved in the accident to comply with the obligation in 1.8.5 of RID/ADR. The report sent to the relevant authority was not intended to be used in the context of prosecution (in addition to the actions taken by the Police or legal authority). But the failure to fulfil that obligation could result in a fine.

23. In order to avoid the lack of information, all the road/rail hazardous events (regardless of the 1.8.5 criteria) should be inserted in the database. The participating countries were invited to send the exported data to Martin Dagan (UNECE) by the end of January 2014.

24. All the requests, including a more structured and detailed description of the accident, that could have an impact on the data available in the current 1.8.5.4 form will be discussed

at the Joint Meeting in March 2014 session. For that purpose, all thoughts and contributions to improve the current database would be very welcome.

25. The Joint Meeting is invited to endorse that work and to provide additional comments for further developments